

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

14 November 1961

State Department review completed

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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Conduct of the South Vietnamese Election of
9 April 1961

1. Diem's opposition consisted of two little known and poorly qualified candidates; his regime has never permitted a cohesive opposition to develop. Moreover, as the incumbent, Diem held overwhelming advantages with his control of the national organization.

2. An assessment by the American Embassy in Saigon in May concluded that the election was conducted "with a reasonable degree of honesty" and almost certainly represented the will of the majority of the people. Diem received about 89 percent of the total vote, which amounted to an estimated 93 percent of the eligible voters.

3. In some areas voter turnout appeared to exceed registered voters--although some of this may have resulted from including army votes in provincial totals; in other areas registration appeared abnormally low, possibly because of Viet Cong operations.

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